

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ACDA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01 /080 W

----- 032714

R 211502Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2841

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USMISSION USBERLIN UNN

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AMEMBASSY SOFIA

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AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 MOSCOW 6220

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, UR, XT

SUBJECT: THE SOVIET APPROACH TO DETENTE AND WEST EUROPEAN

COMMUNISM: THE FRENCH PROBLEM

REF: (A) MOSCOW 6122 (B) MOSCOW 6164, (C) ROME 5513,
(D) ROME 5002, (E) BUCHAREST 1497

1. SUMMARY. THE PCF CHALLENGE TO THE CPSU TO CHOOSE

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BETWEEN THE FRENCH COMMUNISTS AND GISCARD BY INTRODUCING TOUGH ANTI-

IMPERIALIST, ANTI-NATO AMENDMENTS TO THE ECPC DRAFT DOCUMENT IS IN OUR VIEW UNLIKELY TO BE TAKEN UP BY THE SOVIETS. THE SOVIETS WILL BE IRRITATED, BUT THE DILEMMA BETWEEN THEIR REVOLUTIONARY CREDENTIALS AND THEIR STATE INTERESTS GOES BACK TO 1917, AND THEY WILL PREFER "COMPLEX" SOLUTIONS WHICH PRESERVE BOTH. OVER THE PAST FORTNIGHT PONOMAREV AND THREE OF HIS AIDES IN THE CPSU CC INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT HAVE WRITTEN PIECES WHICH, TOGETHER WITH PRAVDA COVERAGE OF MARCHAIS AND RATIANI'S DEFENSE OF WEST EUROPEAN "SOCIAL PROGRESS" AGAINST "INTERFERENCE," CONSTITUTE A FAIRLY SOPHISTICATED SOVIET RESPONSE TO THE FRENCH CHALLENGE. IN ESSENCE, THE SOVIETS HAVE ADOPTED MARCHAIS' "NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE" RHETORIC AND GIVEN VERBAL AND THEORETICAL PROTECTION TO THEIR WESTERN "CLASS ALLIES", BUT IN THE PROCESS THEY HAVE DEFINED THE PROBLEM ON THE STATE-TO-STATE LEVEL, AND LEFT THEIR DETENTE CREDENTIALS INTACT. THE EFFECT IS TO ISOLATE THE FRENCH COMMUNISTS AS HARDLINERS IN ECPC, AND SMOOTH THE PATH OF A SUCCESSFUL GROMYKO VISIT TO PARIS IF GISCARD WANTS ONE. END SUMMARY.

2. BY PROPOSING A SERIES OF HARDLINE "ANTI-IMPERIALIST," ANTI-NATO AMENDMENTS TO THE ECPC DRAFT DOCUMENT AND THEREBY BRINGING THE MARCH MEETING TO A STANDSTILL (BUCHAREST 1497, ROME 5002), THE FRENCH COMMUNISTS GAVE A RATHER ACUTE FORM TO AN OLD SOVIET DILEMMA AT A RATHER DIFFICULT TIME FOR THE SOVIETS. CHALLENGING THE SOVIETS TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THEIR DETENTE CREDENTIALS AND THEIR REVOLUTIONARY CREDENTIALS AT A MOMENT WHEN THEY FACE BURGEONING WESTERN DEBATE OVER DETENTE AND A FLURRY OVER THE "SONNENFELDT DOCTRINE," ON TOP OF THE TROUBLES WHICH HAVE PLAGUED ECPC ITSELF OVER THE PAST SEMESTER AND THE INTRA-COMMUNIST TENSIONS WHICH MARKED THEIR PARTY CONGRESS, IS PESKY. WE SUSPECT THIS IS PRECISELY WHAT THE FRENCH HAVE IN MIND. PRAVDA COMMENTATOR RATIANI'S LAMENT (MOSCOW 6164) THAT THE PCF HAS DEGENERATED TO THE POINT WHERE THERE IS NO ONE LEFT TO TALK TO ALSO SUGGESTS STRONGLY THAT THE CONFIDENTIAL

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SOVIETS ARE QUITE SENSITIVE TO THE CHALLENGE. THE FRENCH WISH TO HIT A NERVE, AND ARE SUCCEEDING.

3. THE SOVIET REACTION, HOWEVER, HAS BEEN CHARACTERISTICALLY SLOW AND CAREFUL, AND WE SEE A NUMBER OF REASONS WHY THIS PATTERN OF PRUDENCE WILL CONTINUE TO DEFINE IT.

4. FIRST, THE PROBLEM IS AN OLD ONE. BASICALLY, IT GOES BACK TO THE ORIGINS OF THE SOVIET STATE IN 1917, EVER SINCE, THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN FORCED TO WEIGH THE ADVANTAGES OF REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVISM IN THE BALANCE OF SOVIET STATE INTERESTS ON A CONTINUING BASIS, AND DEVELOP NEW IDEOLOGICAL FORMULAE TO EXPRESS THE POLICY RESULT. SOVIET LEADERS ARE THEREFORE FAMILIAR WITH THE DILEMMA, AND ADEPT (OR AT LEAST PRACTICED) AT BALANCING ON THESE PARTICULAR HORNS. IN ITS "FRENCH" FORM, THE PROBLEM DATES BACK AT LEAST TO THE OSTENTATIOUS SOVIET FAVORITISM FOR GISCARD IN THE 1974 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, IF NOT TO 1968 AND BEYOND. IN ITS CURRENT PHASE, IT APPEARS TO US TO HAVE BEGUN LAST SUMMER, WHEN THE SOVIETS DECIDED ON THE MORROW OF HELSINKI TO MOVE THE ECPC PROCESS TO A RAPID CONCLUSION BY MAKING THE NECESSARY COMPROMISES WITH THE ITALIANS AND OTHER "SOUTHERN" PARTIES ON THE CONFERENCE DOCUMENT. AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, THE FRENCH REACTION WAS BITTER AND EVEN VINDICTIVE: IF YOU ARE GRANTING AUTONOMY, THEN WE WILL USE IT TO INSIST ON "ANTI-IMPERIALIST", ANTI-GISCARD POSTULATES. FRENCH WILLINGNESS TO TORPEDO ECPC BY INTRODUCING ANTI-IMPERIALIST AMENDMENTS IN MARCH MAY HAVE BEEN CONSOLIDATED BY THE RECENT PULLING AND HAULING BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES AT THE FRENCH AND SOVIET CONGRESSES, BUT FRENCH ANGER DATES BACK SIX MONTHS. THE SOVIETS MAY BE IRRITATED, BUT THEY ARE NOT SURPRISED.

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5. SECOND, THE SOVIETS PREFER "COMPLEX" SOLUTIONS TO "COMPLEX" PROBLEMS, ESPECIALLY WHERE IDEOLOGY IS INVOLVED. AND, EVEN IF FRENCH MOTIVES ARE "POLITICAL" RATHER THAN "IDEOLOGICAL", AS EMBASSY PARIS SUGGESTS, THE ISSUES ARE NECESSARILY IDEOLOGICAL FOR THE SOVIETS, WHO TAKE THE UNITY OF THEORY AND PRACTICE SERIOUSLY. THEY MUST FIND SOLUTIONS WHICH MAINTAIN BOTH IDEOLOGICAL PURITY AND SOVIET STATE INTERESTS, BOTH REVOLUTIONARY AND (IN THE PRESENT CASE) DETENTE CREDENTIALS.

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6. AT THE PRACTICAL LEVEL, IN THE UNDERBRUSH OF IDEOLOGICAL DEFINITION, THIS CAN EVEN BE TO THE ADVANTAGE OF THE FRENCH. RATIANI'S REACTION--THAT THE PCF WOULD SIMPLY HAVE TO REALIZE GREAT POWERS HAVE VITAL STATE INTEREST--IS PROBABLY THE NATURAL ONE FOR MOST SOVIETS. BUT THEY WILL BE RESTRAINED FROM GIVING VENT TO IT BY THE EQUALLY NATURAL RESPONSIBILITY THEY FEEL FOR PROPOSING CONSENSUS SOLUTIONS, RATHER THAN MERELY DEFINING PROBLEMS. AND, IN THIS CASE, THE SOVIET REACTION HAS IN FACT BEEN MORE COMPLEX THAN RATIANI'S.

7. OVER THE PAST FORTNIGHT, CPSU CC SECRETARIAT INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT HEAD PONOMAREV AND THREE OF HIS DEPUTIES HAVE WRITTEN THEORETICAL ARTICLES WHICH DEAL IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER WITH THE ISSUES RAISED BY THE FRENCH AND MANAGE TO ENVELOP THEM IN WHAT AMOUNTS TO A FAIRLY SOPHISTICATED RESPONSE. THE MOST STRIKING FEATURES OF THE COMMENTARIES BY THE SENIOR MEN, PONOMAREV AND HIS FIRST DEPUTY (AND ECPC NEGOTIATOR) VADIM ZAGLADIN, ARE THEIR "STATESMANLIKE" TONE AND THEIR

IMPLICIT CALL FOR A LOWERING OF VOICES (SEPTTEL).
THE EFFECT, IF NOT THE INTENTION, IS TO PIN THE STRIDENT
LABEL ON THE FRENCH. HOWEVER, ZAGLADIN ALSO TOUCHES
TANGENTIALLY ON SOME OF THE ISSUES THE FRENCH ARE
POSING, AND THE TWO JUNIOR MEN DO SO MORE DIRECTLY.

8. TAKING OFF IN THE APRIL 6 IZVESTIYA FROM AN EAST
GERMAN COLLECTIVE WORK ON THE "ROLE OF THE CPSU IN THE
WORLD REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS" PUBLISHED MONTHS BEFORE,
"V. YEZHOV, PROFESSOR" GIVES THEORETICAL
FORMULATION TO THE PRIMACY OF SOVIET STATE INTERESTS, AND
DETENTE. HE DEVELOPS THE FAMILIAR
THESIS THAT SOVIET STATE POWER MAKES DETENTE POSSIBLE,
THAT DETENTE IS GOOD FOR "SOCIAL PROGRESS" EVERYWHERE,
AND THAT THE "PEACE POLICY CONDUCTED BY THE SOVIET
UNION AND THE STRUGGLE FOR THE END GOALS OF THE INTER-
NATIONAL WORKING CLASS ARE INSEPARABLE." THE COROLLARY
--THAT SUPPORT OF THE SOVIET STATE, THE STRUGGLE AGAINST
ANTI-SOVIETISM, IS THE FIRST DEPUTY OF COMMUNISTS --IS
MORE OR LESS EXPLICIT,
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9. A KIND OF OLIVE BRANCH TO THE FRENCH APPEARED
IN THE FORM OF A PARIS TASS ITEM PUBLISHED IN PRAVDA
APRIL 14 REPLAYING L'HUMANITE'S ACCOUNT OF MARCHAIS'
REMARKS AT A JCP MEETING IN TOKYO. AS REPORTED,
MARCHAIS SAID THAT DETENTE AND PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE
"HAVE IMPORTANT SIGNIFICANCE BECAUSE THEY CREATE MORE
FAVORABLE CONDITIONS FOR NATIONAL STRUGGLE." HOWEVER,
HE WENT ON, IMPERIALISM IS TRYING TO PROFIT BY DIVIDING
THE WORLD INTO SPHERES OF INFLUENCE AND USING CERTAIN
COUNTRIES AS REGIONAL GENDARMES, AND "THIS ORIENTATION
SERIOUSLY THREATENS THE INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY
OF OUR COUNTRY. THAT IS WHY FRENCH COMMUNISTS CONTINU-
OUSLY LINK THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRATIC TRANSFORMATIONS
WITH THE STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE, DISARM-
AMENT AND PEACE. G. MARCHAIS IS SHARPLY CONDEMNED THE
STATEMENTS OF HIGHLY-PLACED U.S. ACTIVISTS TO THE
EFFECT THAT THEY DO NOT AGREE TO THE PARTICIPATION OF
COMMUNISTS IN THE GOVERNMENT OF A COUNTRY LIKE FRANCE.
THIS IS UNACCEPTABLE INTERFERENCE." IN THE PRAVDA ACCOUNT, MARCHAIS
CONCLUDED BY THRASHING THE CHINESE.

10. THEN, YEZHOV'S SENIOR COLLEAGUE IN THE CPSU CC INTER-
NATIONAL DEPARTMENT, G. SHAKHNAZAROV, CAME FORWARD
WITH A MAJOR THEORETICAL PIECE ENTITLED "PEACEFUL
COEXISTENCE AND SOCIO-POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT" IN IZVESTIYA
APRIL 16. HE WROTE AS "PRESIDENT OF THE SOVIET POLITICAL
(STATE) SCIENCE ASSOCIATION" DESCRIBING A RECENT MEETING

OF COMMUNIST POLITICAL SCIENTISTS. THE BULK
OF THE ARTICLE IS DEVOTED TO FAMILIAR THESES: NUCLEAR
WEAPONRY MAKES DETENTE AN OBJECTIVE NECESSITY; IT MUST
BE DEFENDED AGAINST RIGHT OPPORTUNISTS AND LEFT AD-
VENTURISTS; AS BREZHNEV SAID AT THE SOVIET CONGRESS,
IT AFFECTS INTER-STATE RELATIONS, AND DOES NOT STOP
THE CLASS STRUGGLE. HOWEVER, SHAKHNAZAROV CARRIES THE
ARGUMENT A STEP FURTHER. TAKING OFF FROM BREZHNEV'S
REMARK ON THE IMPORTANCE OF NON-INTERFERENCE, HE GOES
ON TO SAY THAT THOUGH INTER-STATE RELATIONS AND CLASS
STRUGGLE SHOULD BE "SHARPLY"SEPARATED, THIS DOES NOT
MEAN THERE ARE NO "OBJECTIVE LINKS" BETWEEN THEM.
THESE DO EXIST, EVEN THOUGH "THEY MANIFEST THEMSELVES
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VARIOUSLY, DEPENDING ON THE SPECIFICITY OF THIS OR THAT
SOCIAL-POLITICAL SYSTEM." PEACE CAN ONLY BE SECURED
IF IT IS A JUST PEACE, AND "THE POSSIBILITY OF A
SITUATION IN WHICH ATTEMPTS TO SMOTHER THE LIBERATION
MOVEMENT, TO PREVENT THIS OR THAT NATION FROM FREELY
DETERMINING ITS DESTINY DID NOT INFLUENCE THE WORLD
SITUATION AS A WHOLE IS UNTHINKABLE IN OUR TIME. WE
KNOW NOT A FEW EXAMPLES WHERE SUCH ATTEMPTS LED TO SHARP
CONFRONTATION ON A GLOBAL SCALE, AND EVOKED AND WILL EVOKE
DANGEROUS CONFLICT SITUATIONS."

11. FOR HIS PART, ZAGLADIN, WRITING IN PRAVDA APRIL 20
UNDER THE TITLE "INTERNATIONALISM--THE BANNER OF THE
COMMUNISTS," MAKES IMPERIALIST UNITY AND AGGRESSIVENESS
THE KEY REASON WHY COMMUNISTS MUST RALLY ROUND THE
BANNER (AND THE SOVIETS). MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS,
MILITARY BLOCS BEGINNING WITH NATO, AND ATTEMPTS TO
SPLIT COMMUNIST RANKS ARE SO MANY GOOD REASONS, FOR
ZAGLADIN, WHY COMMUNISTS SHOULD STICK TOGETHER AND
LEARN FROM EACH OTHER'S EXPERIENCE, INCLUDING, NATURALLY,
THAT OF THE COUNTRIES BUILDING SOCIALIST SOCIETIES,
AND ESPECIALLY OF THE CPSU. "IN THIS CONNECTION,"
ZAGLADIN NOTES MILDLY, " AS THE CPSU HAS FREQUENTLY
DECLARED, SUCH AN ATTITUDE BY FRIENDS WILL PROMPT
SOVIET COMMUNISTS TO APPROACH THEIR ACTIVITIES WITH
EVER GREATER RESPONSIBILITY."

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12. AND, WRITING TWO DAYS BEFORE IN PRAVDA'S INTERNATIONAL REVIEW, RATIANI PICKED UP MARCHAIS' POINT BY IDENTIFYING "INTERFERENCE" WITH WEST EUROPEAN NATIONAL OBLIGATIONS, WHICH EAST AND WEST SHARE, AS THE REAL CULPRIT IN WESTERN WARNINGS ABOUT COMMUNIST

PARTICIPATION IN WEST EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS.

13. THE THRUST OF THESE COMMENTARIES, AS WE SEE IT,
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IS TO SQUARE THE CIRCLE OF THE SOVIET CONCEPTUAL DILEMMA IN DEALING WITH WESTERN COMMUNISTS, AND THE FRENCH IN PARTICULAR, BY REAFFIRMING THE CPSU'S COMMITMENT TO

DETENTE AND DEFENSE OF SOVIET STATE INTERESTS, WHILE GIVING VERBAL AND THEORETICAL PROTECTION TO WESTERN COMMUNISTS BY CHARGING THE U.S. WITH INTERFERENCE IN THE AFFAIRS OF SOVEREIGN STATES WHEN IT OBJECTS TO COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION, AND WESTERN GOVERNMENT WITH DEROGATION OF SOVEREIGNTY WHEN THEY CLEAVE TO THE U.S. AND NATO AND FIGHT THEIR OWN COMMUNISTS. THE SOVIETS HAVE ADOPTED MARCHAIS' "NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE" RHETORIC AND APPLIED IT TO EUROPE, BUT IN SO DOING THEY HAVE DEFINED THE ISSUES IN PURELY STATE-TO-STATE TERMS, AND THEREBY MAINTAINED THEIR DETENTE CREDENTIALS INTACT.

14. AS SEEN FROM HERE, THEREFORE, THE FRENCH COMMUNISTS ARE UNLIKELY TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THEIR ATTEMPT TO FORCE THE SOVIETS TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THEM AND GISCARD. WITH THE SOVIET PARTY CONGRESS OVER, THE SOVIETS HAVE NO PRESSING REASON TO MAKE THEORETICAL SACRIFICES IN THE ECPC CONTEXT TO BRING THE PROCESS TO A RAPID CONCLUSION. ON THE CONTRARY, THEY MAY FIND THE PROSPECT OF AN INFINITE PROCESS (WHICH MAKES THEM THE THEORETICAL BROKERS FOR EUROPEAN COMMUNISM) ATTRACTIVE. OUR SOURCES HERE SAY THE YUGOSLAVS NOW SHARE THE SPANISH CP'S CONCERN LEST ECPC TURN INTO A NEW "FLOATING CENTER" FOR THE MOVEMENT, AND ATTRIBUTE THE OPTIMISTIC NOISES ABOUT ECPC PROSPECTS RECENTLY EMANATING FROM BELGRADE TO A DESIRE TO AVOID A NEW CENTER BY FINISHING THE CONFERENCE SOON. FURTHER, THE PCF TACTIC MAY BE TOO CLEVER BY HALF, SINCE IT GIVES THE CPSU A PERFECT DEVICE TO BLAME FRENCH HARDLINING FOR LACK OF ECPC PROGRESS AND PRESERVE SOVIET DETENTE CREDENTIALS WITH WESTERN GOVERNMENTS WHILE LETTING THE ECPC TRACK OFF INTO THE NEVER-NEVER.

15. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE SOVIETS DO NOT WANT A EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTY CONFERENCE IN THE NEAR FUTURE, OR THAT NO CONFERENCE IS POSSIBLE THIS YEAR. IT DOES MEAN THAT THE ONUS FOR FAILURE WILL BE ON THE FRENCH, RATHER THAN ON THE SOVIETS, AND THAT THE

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CONFERENCE CAN TAKE PLACE ONLY IF THE FRENCH MAKE THE CONCESSIONS (AND TO "DETENTE" AT THAT), HAVING ESTABLISHED THEIR "AUTONOMY" FOR THE RECORD. IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THE PARIL 2 SEGRE-KANAPA MEETING (ROME 5513) REPRESENTED AN ATTEMPT BY THE PCI TO MOVE THE FRENCH IN THIS DIRECTION.

16. THE SOVIETS, FOR THEIR PART, MAY HAVE WISHED TO SMOOTH THE PATH BY ADOPTING THE LINE IDENTIFYING WESTERN ANTI-COMMUNISM WITH "INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS"

IN THE SHAKHNAZAROV AND RATIANI COMMENTARIES, BY
DEFINING THE PROBLEM AS DIPLOMATIC, HOWEVER, THEY
HAVE MAINTAINED THE PRIMACY OF SOVIET STATE INTERESTS
AGAINST THE SLINGS AND ARROWS OF OUTRAGEOUS FRENCHMEN,
AND THE PRIMACY OF DETENTE AS THE MAIN "OBJECTIVE
REQUIREMENT" OF THE CURRENT WORLD SITUATION, AND THE
CENTERPIECE OF SOVIET PARTY AND GOVERNMENT FOREIGN
POLICY. WE WOULD THEREFORE EXPECT GROMYKO'S VISIT,
ANNOUNCED IN PRAVDA APRIL 21, TO BE AS SMOOTH AS
GISCARD WANTS TO MAKE IT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DETENTE, POLICIES, COMMUNISM
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 APR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MOSCOW06220
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760151-0416
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760439/aaaabgyl.tel
Line Count: 450
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 9
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 MOSCOW 6122, 76 MOSCOW 6164, 76 ROME 5513
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 APR 2004 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <27 JUL 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE SOVIET APPROACH TO DETENTE AND WEST EUROPEAN COMMUNISM: THE FRENCH PROBLEM
TAGS: PFOR, FR, UR, XT
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006